

## PART 7: MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

### 1. Telephone Calls (FSA Only)

#### A. Authorized Calls

Effective December 1, 2002, authorized telephone calls include:

- official calls authorized by an approving official as a necessary expense to accomplish the mission/purpose of both TDY **away** from the ODS and transfer of station travel
- brief, long-distance personal calls when an employee travels for more than one night; however, reimbursement may not exceed the daily, authorized reimbursement rate
- personal telephone calls placed to the ODS commuting area on the day of return from official travel for notification of a change in schedule. An employee's ODS is defined as the area or location of the employee's permanent work assignment and may include areas of their regular commute or the corporate limits or towns where they are permanently stationed
- personal calls to daycare providers or non-family members as long as the amount of the telephone call does not exceed the daily maximum rate

#### B. Reimbursable Rates When Using Commercial Systems

- if travel is within the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, or the Virgin Islands, the maximum reimbursement is \$5.00 per day
- if travel is outside the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, or the Virgin Islands, the maximum reimbursement is \$15.00 per day
- the maximum aggregated amount that may be approved for each travel period; i.e., consecutive days of official travel, cannot exceed the amount equal to the daily reimbursement rate multiplied by the number of lodging nights
- The authorized amounts exclude any access charges for telephone usage from a hotel. These access charges should be claimed as a "miscellaneous" travel expense on the AD-616.

#### Notes:

- Reimbursement for personal phone calls is not an "automatic" entitlement. In order to receive reimbursement, the traveler must make the call.
- Calls placed from family members to the traveler are not reimbursable; the traveler must make the call in order to be reimbursed.

### C. Making Telephone Calls

Whenever possible, employees should make official telephone calls using any of the following:

- Agency-provided phone card
- government-issued cell phone
- government-provided telephone system

When these services are not available, commercial systems may be used.

Based on the costs savings associated with long distance rates in cell phone contracts, employees must use the long distance service, when available on the government-issued cell phone for international calls while on official foreign travel.

#### Notes:

The Department **prohibits** reimbursement to employees for the use of airplane phones.

Personal cell phones should:

- **not** be used for official business unless an approving official determines, in advance, that an employee's job requires using a personal cell phone and agrees to reimbursement for these calls
- used **only** if no other means of communication such as government telephone systems or public phones are available

The government-issued calling card may be used for personal calls while on official travel, however, usage must not exceed the daily dollar limit prescribed in Chapter 7, Item 1, Telephone Calls.

According to Department Regulation 3300-1, which provides guidelines on Telecommunications and Internet Services and Use, pre-paid phone cards cannot be used for personal calls while on official business.

### D. Claims for Reimbursement

When a commercial telephone system is used, claim reimbursement as:

- "miscellaneous expenses" on AD-616
- code "B" telephone expense on SF-1164

**Note:** The SF-1164 option is available to Federal employees who do not claim reimbursement for telephone calls on a travel voucher.

## E. Approving Claims

Employees and approving officials are responsible for ensuring that the calls were made in accordance with the regulations governing communication expenses incurred while on official travel.

Employees **do not** have to provide documentation for their personal telephone calls in order to be reimbursed, unless the approving official deems the amount claimed is excessive. Employees will be reimbursed for amounts in excess of those authorized only with proper justification and when the approving official determines that there were extenuating circumstances, such as an emergency situation. The traveler **must** request a waiver in these situations and submit a written itemization of the telephone calls with an explanation for the waiver.

## 2. Laundry, Cleaning and Pressing of Clothing

### A. Rules for Reimbursement

Employees traveling on official business in CONUS, who incur expenses for laundry, dry cleaning, or pressing of clothing, may be reimbursed for those expenses as a miscellaneous expense item on the travel voucher, only when the following requirements are met:

- the traveler must incur more than 4 (5 or more) consecutive nights lodging on official travel
- a receipt, from an establishment at the TDY site, must be provided to substantiate the claim
- the cost of the cleaning must be reasonable, as determined by the approving official

**This reimbursement applies to official travel in CONUS only.**

## 3. Taxes on Lodging

### A. Rules for Reimbursement

Lodging taxes paid by an employee are reimbursable as a miscellaneous travel expense limited to the taxes on reimbursable lodging costs. This reimbursement applies to official travel in **CONUS and Non-Foreign Areas outside CONUS only**. These taxes should be claimed as a “miscellaneous expense” item on the AD-616.

In addition, energy surcharges for lodging are reimbursable and should also be claimed as “miscellaneous” or “other” expenses on travel vouchers.

## 4. Baggage

### A. Definitions

The following terms and definitions are used in this section:

- "Baggage" means government property and personal property of the traveler necessary for official travel.
- "*Excess baggage*" means baggage that is not carried free by the transportation company due to excess:
  - weight
  - size
  - number of pieces

### B. Authorization for Excess Baggage Expenses

Excess baggage expenses must be authorized prior to travel. The excess baggage must be authorized on:

- AD-202 for FSA employees
- AD-202 for CO employees and COC members as of October 1, 2003
- OICD-94 for ICD "participant" travel

### C. Payment/Documentation for Excess Baggage

For excess baggage expenses, receipts are required to show:

- weight of the baggage
- points between which it was shipped
- extra cost

### D. Other Reimbursable Baggage Charges

Other baggage charges that are reimbursable include:

- transfer of baggage
- storage of baggage when it is shown that the storage was solely on account of official business
- checking and handling of baggage. Charges or tips at transportation terminals shall be allowed for handling **government property** carried by the traveler. Tips for handling personal luggage are considered incidental expenses and are reimbursed as part of M&IE.

## E. Claim for Lost or Damaged Baggage

When baggage is lost or damaged by the carrier during official government travel, the traveler should file a claim according to this table.

Step	Action
1	File claim with carrier. If claim exceeds amount paid by the carrier, go to Step 2.
2	If government travel charge card was used, file claim with travel charge card contractor who may carry additional baggage insurance at no additional cost. If the claim exceeds the amounts received in steps 1 and 2, go to Step 3.
3	File claim with government. Contact FMD or administrative officer for proper forms.

## 5. Other Miscellaneous Expenses

### A. Other Expenses Authorized

Other expenses related to official business are reimbursable provided authorization is included on the AD-202 for FSA employees and CO and COC employees as of October 1, 2003.

### B. Types of Other Expenses

Examples of other miscellaneous expenses include:

- stenographic or typing services
- rental of typewriter/personal computer in conjunction with the preparation of reports or correspondence that must be completed by the employee while the employee is on travel
- services of guides, interpreters, or drivers
- lodging taxes (**CONUS and non-foreign areas outside CONUS only**)
- energy surcharges for lodging
- laundry, cleaning, and pressing of clothing (CONUS only)
- hire of conference center room or hotel room for official business
- storage of government property used on official business
- faxes, telegrams, etc.
- official telephone calls/service (when government provided services not available)
- fees for travelers checks, money orders, or certified checks

**B. Types of Other Expenses, *continued***

- transaction fees for use of ATM's - government travel charge card program only
- commissions on conversion of foreign currency
- passport and/or visa fees
- costs of photographs for passports and visas
- foreign country exit fees
- costs of birth, health, and identity certificates
- charges for inoculations that cannot be obtained through a Federal dispensary

**Note:** For the procurement of certain goods and services by contract subject to the Federal Acquisition Regulation, a contracting officer's approval or action may be necessary. If in doubt, contact MSD.

**C. Receipts Required for Miscellaneous Expenses**

Receipts are required to support miscellaneous expenses in excess of \$75 with the exception of:

- laundry, dry cleaning and pressing of clothing
- excess baggage
- personal phone calls considered to be "excessive" by the approving official